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PRESS RELEASE

Workshop on the Challenges of the Teaching Profession

Representatives from all teacher training institutes and schools in the Republic of Macedonia, project implementers, the Ministry of Education, and Teacher's Unions came together on April 12 for a workshop entitled *Challenges of the Teaching Profession*. Held in the Rectorate of the University SS. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, workshop participants discussed a range of issues related to enrollment policy, education standards, quality research and accountability.

"This workshop shows that Macedonians recognize that innovation, change and improvement are essential—especially when it comes to education," said Patricia Rader, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director. USAID is part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia.

Vice Rector of the University Zoran Velkovski added "The workshop provides concrete directions for systemic change in pre-service teacher training, as well as for continuing education."

Organized by USAID's Creative Teaching and Learning project, the workshop also addressed the structure and quality of initial teacher training, professional improvement and competences of teachers at all education levels, quality assurance, and legislation related to the teaching profession.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. Over 25 projects worth more than \$25 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.

Since 2002, USAID's Creative Teaching and Learning Project (CTL), which is implemented by Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM), has introduced student-centered teaching methods, established media labs in 45 primary and 18 secondary schools and furnished them with new computers and internet connectivity, and introduced new theories of whole-school improvement and extra-curricular activities such as debate and student government. In 2005, CTL provided equipment and technical assistance to eight pre-service teacher training institutions across Macedonia in order to improve the quality of instruction and ensure that future teachers start their careers equipped with student-centered teaching methodologies and with the use of information technology as a learning tool. CTL has assisted

all pre-service teacher trainers to implement the Bologna Declaration requirements and develop study programs compatible with European programs.